

7/25/70

Dear Cindy,

We'd never seen the elephant stamp. Lil saves stamps for youngsters, one of whom will be deligated. All those you sent from abroad went to kinds.

I was in Washington yesterday. I stayed busy. I'm sorry I didn't phone. Had I taken time to think, I'd have realized the weekend was upcoming, and that there might have been a chance that you or you and your mother might have wanted to come up. I expect to be there again soon, probably Tuesday. I can get a message at 347-3919, the office to which I will then be going. It may be later than Tuesday.

If I'll have to be going there again, say the next day or the following one, I'll try and give you a call. Perhaps you'd like a chance to talk this over, and if I have to go back again soon, it might give you the chance.

My experiences with lawyers, for the most part, have not endeared them. Where I have had to turn personal matters over to lawyers, the results were, without exception, disastrous. One the rich can afford the good ones, and without prospect of a handsome fee, except in rare cases, they do little.

However, I do have a friend who is an honest, very decent man and a lawyer. I will be seeing him Tuesday, or whatever day I'll be in Washington. Perhaps he can make a recommendation. This kind of law can also be a specialty. If any lawyer can handle such matters, those who have specialized are in a position to serve their clients better. This means two things: if there is a dispute between your father and your mother, if he can obtain such services and she cannot, this may work to her disadvantage; and if he has influence she lacks, he may be able, if he is so disposed, to use it behind the scenes.

My accident, you know my attitude in such matters from the incident with your prof. I believe the average man is unfair to and slightly contemptuous of women. Up women's lib!

If I do not hear from you promptly, I will assume that there is no immediate emergency, and I will explore with care, as I can. This friend is not the only one I can consult. While I cannot predict the results, there are others I know who may know people. It would be better, if your mother is in a position to do it, to take her time and be certain of each step she takes.

I have never asked any questions about this. I do not now seek to pry. However, your's is not a common name. The only public mention of one identical to it I can recall is that of a man once associated with the Kennedys. If this happens to be your father and a real dispute develops between him and your mother, questions of influence and politics may come up.

Nor is it simply a matter of getting a lawyer. For example, if the case were to be tried in Virginia, then a Washington lawyer not licensed in Virginia would have to obtain a Virginia man, which might make the whole thing more costly and otherwise add complications. It might then be better to begin with a Virginia lawyer. I know none, but I do know some political figures who may be in a position to provide an evaluation and a recommendation.

Both happily and unfortunately, I have no experience in such matters, and I have had personal knowledge of but a single divorce case where I was kept intimately informed. So, aside from my experience with life, the basis for my advising you is limited. That one case was of Lil's cousin, a very sweet girl who married an ox. He made life miserable, ruined their kid, and she tolerated the intolerable until the younger child, a girl, was about to graduate high school. Once she made up her mind to make the break, she was so anxious to get the whole thing over with she was incapable of thought-out rational decisions and got a very poor settlement. It is not uncommon, I believe, for men to let the women sweat it out, and for women against whom the deck can be stacked, to ultimately get impatient. I hope these things are not applicable, and that there can be a civilized settlement between your parents.

To a degree, you seem to be in the middle, and I assume this is an unpleasant position. Are you in a position to be an "honest broker", should the occasion arise and should your parents so desire? Have you the capacity? If not, be careful and don't try it without discussing it with your mother. Don't do it on your own.

This is also a ticklish area because passions and pride are often involved, and emotions over which people often have little or no control.

Because this is off the top of the head and because I lack personal experience in such affairs, this probably sounds incoherent. I feel a little frustrated not being able to help a friend as much as I'd like. However, what I may be able to do I will attempt, and this coming week I'll see about a recommendation. This friend, by the way, lives in Arlington, but his office is in Washington. He has just returned to the practice of law (his earlier experience is also that of a law prof) after some years on the hill as counsel to a committee. He has had other government law experience. He is a liberal Democrat. He also stays very busy. One of the things I'll ask him, without speaking for or obligating your mother, is if he'd speak to her about this, informally, if she'd like that. You see, I also know nothing about your mother, and she may be without the kinds of friends who can be helpful in such matters, or all those who might be may be close to your father or unwilling to get involved in a dispute between two friends.

To sum up: I don't know what I can do, but I am willing to try and will, without obligating your mother to anything. And if this is the way things are, perhaps a change of scene for a weekend would be good medicine.

I'll be happy for you to do some typing if you do not have a job at the time and it will represent no sacrifice for you;

You must be very important to your mother now, more than a daughter ordinarily would be. Do not let this get you (and I am not suggesting it is so), for you would not then be as helpful to her.

Best wishes,